Ex Libris
JOHN AND MARTHA DANIELS

March 24 1876

General Henry Eugene Davies
1ST EDITION
VERY RARE
Fewer than 25 copies printed
"only a few copies have the photographs" (Phillips p. 96)
"one of the rarest of American Hunting books" (Cummins)
(5 years before Bighorn)

TEN DAYS

ON THE PLAINS

BY

[Gen. H. E. Davies]

PRINTED BY CROCKER & CO.
NEW YORK.

1871. 1872(?)

Bruce Sheridan

Dead

To Lieutenant General Sheridan.

General,

To no one could this book be more appropriately dedicated than to yourself for to you alone our party of friends was indebted for all the adventures and enjoyments which it attempts to record.

Your kind hospitality, and generous care for our comfort and welfare, rendered a journey that, under ordinary circumstances, would be trying and difficult, an agreeable and delightful episode in the lives of all who accompanied you; and one which will ever be remembered by us with the highest and warmest appreciation.

I have therefore taken the liberty of dedicating this little volume to you, trusting that notwithstanding its many imperfections you may find in it something of interest or entertainment, and in that hope with the expression of my best wishes for your health and happiness, I remain

Yours, very truly,

* *

SUFFIELD CUP
WON
GEN. CHAS. L. FITZHUGH U.S.

Ten Days on the Plains.

CHAPTER I.

Invitation to the Hunt—What was expected—Leaving New York—Journey to Chicago—Excitement in the City—The first Buffalo—Dining—Pigeon Shooting, &c.

LIEUTENANT-GENERAL SHERIDAN, on a visit to the East during the Summer of 1871, mentioned to some of his friends that in the month of September he intended to explore the country between Fort McPherson on the Platte river, in Nebraska, and Fort Hays, in Kansas, and kindly invited a large party to accompany him on his trip. His invitations were gladly accepted, presenting, as they did, an opportunity of visiting a part of our country seldom traveled by the white man, and which affords perhaps the best field for the sportsman that can be found in the United States. What could be more attractive to the tame citizen of the East than the prospect of traveling in the wilds of the region we had been taught by our early studies in geography to describe as the Great American Desert—to hunt the buffalo, course the antelope, stalk

the elk and deer, shoot the wild turkey, and pursue the mighty jack rabbit in his native hills.

The man whose days were passed in the excitements of Wall street could find in the congenial society of buffalo bulls and grizzly bears an agreeable change from the ordinary associations of his life. The sailor could for once desert his accustomed element, and on the great plains of the West form an idea of life on shore that he had never before conceived. The man who had nothing to do could look forward to the prospect of abundant occupation, and he who at his home believed himself to be overworked could imagine in such a trip a period of idleness and ease. Added to all these inducements, there was some slight expectation of becoming acquainted with the noble red man in his own home, and any doubts we had as to the hospitality with which the savage warriors might receive their guests, were dissipated by the assurance that the party would be furnished with a military escort, so strong that if an Indian battle should prove to be one of the entertainments provided for the General's friends, they would be able to return safely to their homes with scalp untouched by a hostile knife, and add to their triumphs as huntsmen the higher glories of successful warriors.

Thus assured, a large and pleasant party was quickly gathered, and the campaign was opened on the evening of the 16th of September, when most of those who intended to participate in the excursion met in a palace car at the Hudson River Railroad Depot, in New York City, *en route* for Chicago, which Gen. Sheridan had fixed as the point of meeting. All came well provided with arms, ammunition and hunting equipments, and due care had been taken to provide amply against all dangers, either physical or spiritual, to which any might be exposed. Old friends

shook hands, strangers were introduced and made to feel as friends at once, and at 8 P. M. we were launched upon our journey.

A comfortable car had been secured for our party, and we were provided with every resource to while away the time. The hours passed rapidly and pleasantly, and all felt that the journey had commenced under the best auspices. On the following morning we awoke to find ourselves passing rapidly through Western New York, and early in the day we reached a spot of interest to all of us, the childhood's home of our friend and companion, Mr. Lawrence Jerome. As we passed through the fields so well remembered by him, he held us all absorbed by the anecdotes and incidents of his early career, told in a way to touch every heart; and whenever a stoppage of the train occurred in the towns where he had been known in earlier days, it was affecting to see the interest with which he would rush to the platform of the car and exchange warm and affectionate greetings with his old friends and neighbors. But even for sentiments so touching as his, a railway journey gives but brief time; and we were carried onward through Buffalo, Cleveland and all the other towns, be they more or less, between New York and Chicago, on the Lake Shore route, until, on the morning of September 18th, on a bright, fine day, we reached Chicago. The Sherman House was fixed upon as our headquarters, and thither we repaired, and soon the large hall of the hotel was encumbered with a pile of gun cases, hunting boots, ammunition boxes, champagne baskets, demijohns and other necessities for a hunting campaign, that astonished and bewildered even the people of Chicago, accustomed as they are to shooting and to drinking at discretion.

A silent and respectful crowd quickly gathered about these objects of general interest, and many and varied were the rumors as to what could be the purpose of these formidable preparations. Some, hearing that one of us wore an Ulster, conjectured that a new Fenian expedition was on foot, forgetting that those brave warriors have always been so thirsty that they invariably consume their spirit rations so far in advance of their objective point that their Dutch courage is never on hand when a campaign fairly begins. Others again, believed that our paternal Government at Washington had at last decided upon actually and openly adopting as its policy, in the settlement of the Indian difficulty, the plan that has unofficially but practically been in use from time immemorial, and that we, as new Peace Commissioners, *vice* Vincent Colyer and others removed, were bound on a mission to the plains to put it in execution. Bibles, moral pocket handkerchiefs, and Quakers having proved to be a failure, it was said that the Government had fallen back upon whisky and gunpowder; and these time-honored remedies for all human ills, coupled with the establishment of a Stock Exchange in the Indian country, were expected to reduce Spotted Tail, Red Cloud and all their brethren to the condition of law-abiding citizens of the United States in the shortest possible time.

The presence with our party of an eminent philanthropist from the City of Brotherly Love gave great strength to the Peace Commission story; and the ingenious author of this theory posted off to a newspaper office to procure the issue of an extra, giving the most reliable and latest intelligence of this strange arrival in the city. He found, however, that he had been anticipated by another news collector, still more ingenious and far more active, who,

without wasting any of his time in inquiry or speculation, had invented, written out and published a complete, exact and veracious account of our party, embellished with incidents, and giving fragments of the personal history of some of us that elevated his paper almost to the dignified position that is assumed by the New York *Sun* whenever that eminent journal has occasion to make mention in its columns of a gentleman.

It was of course gratifying to us, coming from the East, to see that the example of our journalists had been able to influence so powerfully the tone and style of a western paper, and all agreed that our historian required but time and experience to render his paper in all respects a worthy competitor of the reputable journal that he was evidently endeavoring to imitate.

The day in Chicago was spent in making preparations for the trip, purchasing such supplies as our Chicago friends, more versed in western life, informed us were yet necessary to our complete equipment, and in visiting objects of interest about the city. Those who drove to Lincoln Park were gratified by the sight of the buffalo there kept in the zoological gardens, and from the appearance of the undersized dirty brutes that appeared wallowing like hogs in a bed of filth provided by the good citizens of Chicago for their accommodation, our ideas of the majestic and savage animal we came so far to hunt, were materially changed.

One of our most ardent sportsmen offered untold wealth to the policeman in charge of the grounds for the opportunity of taking a few shots at a buffalo, at short range from the outside of the pen, by way of getting his hand in practice, but the guardian of the place, with an appalling indifference to the interests of true sport, turned a deaf ear to his entreaties.

Evening found us seated at a pleasant dinner at the Sherman House, enlivened by the presence of several prominent gentlemen of Chicago, and dinner over, all repaired to General Sheridan's house, where we were most hospitably entertained.

The morning of the following day was spent at the pigeon shooting grounds on Fullerton Avenue, where a closely contested match was shot between Col. Crosby and Mr. Livingston on one side, and Mr. Johnson and Mr. Heckscher on the other.

Mr. Lawrence Jerome, with great kindness, volunteered to undertake the duty of keeping within bounds all pigeons that were missed by the contestants, and performed his task with zeal if not with much success; and General Davies was highly distinguished for the skill displayed by him in keeping the score.

This entertainment was succeeded by a pleasant lunch party at Mr. Johnson's hospitable bachelor mansion on Pine street—a pleasure that can never be renewed, as the scene of our enjoyment was destroyed in the fire that soon after ravaged Chicago.

After lunch a long drive in the environs of Chicago and a visit to the race-track, where a hog show was in progress, occupied the afternoon, and we returned to the hotel with minds overcome by prices of real estate and weights of porkers that could only exist in the enterprising and aspiring West.

A charming dinner at the Chicago Club, given by General Sheridan, closed this day, the last of our stay in Chicago on our outward trip.

CHAPTER II.

Our Party—On the Way to the Plains—Journey on the Prairies—Council Bluffs and Missouri River—Omaha—Union Pacific Railroad—The Fat Contributor—The Cups.

EARLY on Wednesday morning, September 20th, our number was completed by the arrival from New York of Commodore Bennett, of the N. Y. Yacht Club, and at ten o'clock in the morning our party was installed in a spacious palace car on the Northwestern Railroad and fairly started for the plains. And here, as all were first together, is the time to give the muster roll of our expedition, and so their names are given upon this paper to take their place hereafter in history.

Our Commander-in-Chief, Lieut. Gen. Sheridan, comes first, so well and deservedly known to fame, and of whom it is fit here to say that he is as courteous and hospitable as a host, as he is gallant and distinguished as a soldier.

Mr. Lawrence R. Jerome comes next. The gravity, inseparable from advanced years, and official position, were a wholesome and perhaps necessary check on the exuberant spirits of some of the more youthful members of the party; but he was willing to encourage the amusements and sports of his younger friends within all reasonable bounds, and filled, to the satisfaction of all, the part of the heavy father of the expedition.

Mr. Leonard W. Jerome, who is too well known to require description.

Commodore Bennett, of the N. Y. Yacht Club, and N. Y. Herald, who had for the time abandoned "his home on the rolling deep," to try the discomforts of life on shore.

Carroll Livingston, Esq.

Major Heckscher.

Gen. Fitzhugh, of Pittsburg, an old officer of Gen. Sheridan's command during the war.

Capt. M. Edward Rogers, of Philadelphia.

Col. J. Schuyler Crosby.

Gen. Davies.

Samuel Johnson, Esq., of Chicago.

Gen. Stager, Superintendent of the Western Union Telegraph.

Charles Wilson, Esq., editor of the Chicago Journal.

Gen. Rucker, Quartermaster-General, and Dr. Asch, Surgeon, both on Gen. Sheridan's staff.

Our party thus made up, we left Chicago on a fine bright morning; intending to go on by rail without a stop, until we reached Fort McPherson, on the North Platte river, the point from which our expedition on the plains would start. Ample provision for all our needs had been made in advance at the Fort, and we would find everything in readiness upon our arrival.

Throughout the day we rode over the rolling prairies of Illinois and Iowa, scenery that soon becomes monotonous, but still of interest to those who behold it for the first time; and which is impressive from the idea it gives by its vast extent and great fertility of the agricultural resources of the western country.

A hotel car attached to our train furnished a table that was far superior to railway refreshments obtainable at the

East, and after a pleasant day, and a sound night's sleep, we rose to find ourselves, on the morning of the 21st, approaching Council Bluffs on the east bank of the Missouri, opposite to Omaha. Here occurred the first interruption to the easy and pleasant course our journey had run since leaving New York.

The rapid and constantly shifting current of the Missouri prevents the building of any wharfs or bulkheads on its banks, and the bridge over the river being incomplete, it took some time and much trouble to place ourselves and all our various belongings upon a dirty ferryboat that conveyed us across the stream.

We reached the city of Omaha after a considerable delay in the crossing, and had time, while waiting for the train that was to carry us further westward, to survey the whole extent of the capital of Nebraska. Everything to make a large city is to be found there, except population, buildings, and the comforts of life. But these slight accessions to the land and to the streets which they have in unlimited quantities, the inhabitants assured us are soon to be provided in abundance.

Though what should induce any human being who can possibly live elsewhere, to go to Omaha, or, having got there, to remain longer than the shortest possible time in which he can get away, is a query that would be difficult indeed to solve. Dealing in real estate seemed to be the chief occupation of the people; everybody had plenty to sell at enormous prices, and if buyers could be found it would doubtless be a profitable business; but still all live in hope that at some time somebody will come to Omaha who will want to purchase. This pleasing anticipation, and the watching of the trains at the railroad, suffice for the employment of the citizens. One gentleman, indeed, was dis-

covered who professed to keep a hotel, but as he had nothing in it to eat, and could give no certain assurance when there would be anything there that could be eaten, and was evidently greatly bored by the request made to him for some kind of entertainment, it was easy to see that he was a real estate capitalist, who had by some accident got into his tavern, and had been too lazy ever to take down the sign. Some old friends and some new ones were met among the officers of the army stationed at Omaha, which is the headquarters of the Department of the Platte, and who did all that was possible to render our brief stay pleasant. About noon we left Omaha on the Union Pacific Railway, and soon found ourselves upon the plains. Here the road runs for hundreds of miles straight as an arrow, and flat upon the earth; without grades to overcome or rivers to cross. On either side, far as the eye can reach, the land spreads out as smooth and level as the ocean in a calm, and for days the traveler goes on without one change to break the monotony of the view. Here and there at intervals of from ten to twenty miles, a station is reached, around which are grouped a few small houses built of boards, and at which five or six people are collected, to witness what is to them the great event of the day.

One mile of the road is precisely like the other, one station is the counterpart of the next, and after the novelty of scene is exhausted it must be confessed that railway travel on the plains is frightfully monotonous.

However, our party enjoyed the trip well, not being dependent on the scenery alone for interest; and we were fortunate in having, as a companion, for some fifty miles Mr. Griswold, of Cincinnati, who is well known at the West as a humorous writer for several papers, under the

nom de plume of Our Fat Contributor, and a peripatetic philosopher, or, as they are called at the present day, a lecturer, of the school of the late lamented Artemus Ward. His fund of entertaining stories, and the relation of some of his lecturing experiences, told with great effect, made us all regret our arrival at a station where he was obliged to leave the train, being engaged, as he told us, to lecture there that evening. We parted with him with the kindest wishes, including most heartily the hope that he might have an audience, which, judging from the size of the city where he left the train, seemed doubtful. Indeed, to keep him with us, it was proposed to take the whole population on board the train—of which it might have filled half a car—and have him lecture to them while *en route* rather than lose his company. But this he declined, with thanks, and so we parted. How the lecture went off we never heard; but from the fragments Mr. Griswold gave us there was certainly too much fun in it for the small town in which it was to be delivered, and one could not but pity the few dozen poor people who that evening would be compelled to do an amount of laughing, that should never be imposed on an audience of less than five hundred.

In the afternoon some rode upon the cowcatcher of the engine, others read, and so passed away the time. Evening found us all united in our car, and discussing the prospects of our hunt, so soon to begin. It was agreed that two cups should be procured by general subscription and given on our return, one to him who succeeded in bringing down the first buffalo, and the other to the one who secured the first elk. With conversation and the aid of music the time went by, until we retired at an early hour, expecting to conclude our railway journey during the night

CHAPTER III.

Platte City—Ride to Fort McPherson—Review of the Troops—Fort McPherson—Army Life on the Plains—Camp Rucker—Preparations for the Trip—Buffalo Bill—Choosing Horses—Ball at the Fort.

THE next morning, Sept. 22d, we awoke early to find that our car had been shunted off on a side track at Platte City during the night, and our travel on the rail was ended for the time.

Here we were met by Gen. Emory, 5th U. S. Cavalry, commanding Fort McPherson, who had come over the preceding evening to meet Gen. Sheridan, and found conveyances prepared for our traps and ourselves, to take us to the Fort after breakfast. We visited the camp of a company of the 5th cavalry stationed at Platte City, for the protection of the railway, commanded by Major Brown, who intended to accompany our party on the expedition, and found the hearty welcome and cordial hospitality that always is met with among soldiers. A stroll about Platte City (a proceeding, it must be confessed, that did not take much time) disclosed little of interest. There were about a dozen houses—some of boards and some of sun-dried bricks—the ruins of a good many more; a few hard looking men, and still harder looking women; some mules, a few cows, and a good many goats. Nobody seemed to

have any occupation or any means of living, except the railway employees, and we soon learned that Platte City was a thing of the past. It was one of the many towns called into existence by the building of the Union Pacific Railway; that existed, grew, and flourished so long as the road was incomplete, and the thousands of workmen, teamsters, and attaches of all kinds required some place for shelter and some opportunity of spending their money. It is an old town for that part of the world, and is now undergoing the decline that attends either communities or individuals that have outlived their usefulness. Its former glories were vividly described by an old inhabitant, who touchingly told how, in the good old days of railroad building, there would be in town each night some five hundred drunken men with their pockets full of money; how every house not devoted to some worse use, was either a drinking shop or a gambling den, and often both; how never a night would pass without the pleasing excitement of at least two murders; and that always on Saturday evenings the whole population would vary the usual routine, by a general free fight, that would furnish the community with excitement, variety, and conversation until the next occurred.

Whenever the tone of society appeared to be deteriorating, the majesty of the law would be asserted by the hanging of two or three individuals whom the general popular sentiment believed could best be spared, and their bodies, dangling gracefully from a telegraph pole, gave assurance to all good citizens that if crime existed, somebody was punished, and the object of an example at least was obtained.

Our western friends upon the plains owe much to the valuable invention of Morse, for in former times, after

Judge Lynch had caught and convicted (which terms may be taken to be synonymous) a malefactor, it was often a difficult matter to know what to do with him. The total absence of timber interfered greatly with the performance of a dignified and regular execution, and various and often excessively incongruous expedients had to be adopted to put out of the world those gentlemen who were found to be neither useful nor ornamental when alive. Under these circumstances, the crop of people who deserved hanging, but to hang whom no facilities existed, rapidly increased until science and civilization, advancing westward, brought with them the telegraph, and provided the whole continent with a line of gallows arranged about twenty to the mile, for some three thousand miles. The opportunity thus created was speedily improved. But this movement has been somewhat overdone, and a scarcity of subjects for execution is now being acutely felt. Indeed, our cicerone in Platte City told us that there had been but one hanging in a year past, and that fellow was not of much account, and had done nothing in particular to deserve it.

Our meditations over the ruined splendors of Platte City were brought to an end by a summons to breakfast, which we found at the Railway Hotel, and which was cooked and served in a way that could be imitated to advantage in some of our eastern railway saloons.

After breakfast we found prepared the carriages to take us to Fort McPherson, distant eighteen miles from Platte City. Gen. Emory's carriage was there, destined for Gen. Sheridan's use. Major Brown turned out a neat phaeton with a very spicy unicorn team, and two four-horse ambulances made up the rest of our transportation, with a couple of army wagons for baggage.

We were soon accommodated in the different vehicles,

and started, those who had a fancy to display their skill as charioteers taking the reins of the ambulances, which were provided with good teams. The road, though entirely unmade, was excellent, being as hard and smooth as a turnpike, and in about an hour and a half an eighteen mile drive was completed, and we came in sight of Fort McPherson. Here a most unexpected scene was presented. The garrison, consisting of five companies of the Fifth Cavalry, under the command of Major Carr, was paraded to receive Gen. Sheridan, by whom it was to be reviewed, and to our surprise we found a large party of ladies in carriages and on horseback, who had been attracted out to witness the ceremony. It seemed strange to see such a sight so far as we were from civilization, and in the midst of such a desert as we were in. The band played, the cavalry passed in review very handsomely before the General, and we then drove up to the Fort, where Gen. Emory received us most hospitably, and we were soon presented to all the inmates of the garrison. A western fort differs much from the idea conveyed by the word as it is generally used; and by the term fort is intended a military post sufficiently protected to be secure against Indian attacks, but unprovided with artillery beyond two or three field pieces. Fort McPherson is a large square enclosure (surrounded by a stockade), containing perhaps six acres.

In the interior one side of the square is occupied by the buildings used as officers' quarters, these being detached cottages of one story and a half, with verandahs in front, prettily finished, and, as summer quarters, pleasant enough. On the opposite side are the men's barracks, long buildings, each designed to contain a company of troops; and on the other two sides of the square are scattered buildings used for the various needs of the men and officers, such as the bakery, cook houses, a reading room, and a chapel.

The majority of the officers were married, and had with them their families, so that something of society could be enjoyed at the post, and all spoke of this Fort as one of the most agreeable stations on the plains. Still, from the interest that was excited by the passing visit of a few strangers, it was easy to see that the life in such a position must be monotonous and dreary in the extreme; and it was difficult not to pity those—and especially the ladies—whose lives were to be spent in this or in similar garrisons. The officers of a garrison have, of course, occupation, but this is very slight, and offers no variety or interest, except in case they are called upon to take the field, and then they enter upon an Indian campaign, to engage in what are the hardest and most fatiguing duties that in any country soldiers are called upon to undertake—to overcome an enemy whom it is little glory to conquer, and with the certainty of a hideous and repulsive fate in the event of defeat.

To the ladies who are willing to share their husbands' fortunes on the frontier, existence must be dreary indeed. They cannot be said to ever have a home, subject as they are to the constant changes of station required by military discipline; and while thus cut off from the one sphere in which woman is happy, and always finds interest and occupation, they are deprived of all the amusements and resources that in more favored localities are open to their sex.

However, this was no time to regret the hard fate of our army friends, who, on this occasion, at least, appeared to enjoy themselves highly, and were cordially kind and attentive to the strangers who had entered within their gates.

From the Fort we soon rode down to the place where the camp of our escort had been pitched, and where prepara-

tions had been made for our reception, and there found all ready for movement on the following day.

This camp, the first of the expedition, was named Camp Rucker, in honor of General Rucker, Quartermaster-General on General Sheridan's staff, an old and gallant soldier, and with experience as a hunter equaling that he had acquired as an officer.

Everything for our entertainment had been most carefully and completely arranged by Lieutenant Hayes, of the 5th cavalry, who accompanied us as the quartermaster of the expedition, and we found that our expectations of roughing it on the plains were not likely to be realized under his administration. For the use of our party six wall tents had been prepared as sleeping quarters, with one hospital tent to be used as a mess hall and another as a kitchen, and quarters for servants. One hundred cavalry men were encamped about the tents, detailed as an escort, under the command of Major Brown.

A train of sixteen wagons was provided to carry baggage, supplies, and forage, and among them one loaded with ice, the most valuable cargo of all, and which was sufficient to supply our needs during the whole journey.

In addition to the wagons we had three four-horse ambulances to carry guns, and the lighter personal baggage of the party, and in which an opportunity of driving for those who might become weary of the saddle on a long day's march was afforded.

At the camp we were introduced to the far-famed Buffalo Bill, whose name has been lately used to "point a moral and adorn a tale," in the New York Ledger, and whose life and adventures have furnished the material for the brilliant drama that under his name has drawn crowded and delighted audiences at one of our metropolitan theatres.

We had all heard of him as destined to be our guide

across the plains, and had listened to many anecdotes of his skill and experience as a hunter, and of his daring bravery and reckless courage as an Indian fighter. From these stories the idea had sprung, that in him we should meet the typical desperado of the West, bristling with knives and pistols, uncouth in person, and still more disagreeable in manners and address. Instead of all this, it was a pleasant surprise to find that Buffalo Bill—or, to name him properly, William Cody, Esquire—which title he holds of right, being, in the county where his home is, a justice of the peace, was a mild, agreeable, well-mannered man, quiet and retiring in disposition, though well informed and always ready to talk well and earnestly upon any subject of interest, and in all respects the reverse of the person we had expected to meet. Tall and somewhat slight in figure, though possessed of great strength and iron endurance; straight and erect as an arrow, and with strikingly handsome features, he at once attracted to him all with whom he became acquainted, and the better knowledge we gained of him during the days he spent with our party increased the good impression he made upon his introduction.

Our first business in camp was to give to each man the place he was to occupy in the various tents, which were in number enough to allow three men in each. This required some nicety of adjustment, as we had fat men and thin, short men and tall; some who snored and some who could not endure such a habit; but, at last, all were arranged so satisfactorily that no change was made throughout the entire trip. Next in importance came the assignment of horses. A number of horses had been provided for our mounts equal to that of our party, and lots were drawn to give the preference of choice. The first choice was won by Mr. Leonard Jerome, and with excellent judgment he se-

lected a horse that on our long trip proved himself to be the best of the lot.

The horses were drawn off in this way, one by one, some getting good and others poor animals; but the latter, by various exchanges, were substituted for other horses in the garrison, until, at last, every man had a horse with which he expressed himself at least as highly pleased. A pleasant lunch party was given by Gen. Amory at the Fort, made agreeable by the presence of several ladies, and accompanied by music from the excellent band of the Regiment. In the afternoon our horses were tested and ammunition looked over, and some pistol and rifle practice finished the day. At sunset we sat down to our first dinner under canvas, which was warmly commended, and gave promise that we had little to fear from bad living in our campaign, if we should be successful enough with our arms to provide material for our meals.

Our hospitable friends at the Fort, who seemed determined to leave nothing undone that could contribute to our pleasure, during the afternoon sent down invitations for a ball, to be given in the evening, which were, of course, accepted with pleasure.

The large chapel of the Post we found fitted up and decorated for the purpose, the music furnished by the band was beyond praise, our partners were charming and agreeable, and the affair went off with great success. Several supper parties were improvised by some of the officers, who, being unmarried, could venture on a little dissipation, and the pleasant strains of "We Won't Go Home 'Till Morning" were heard about the Fort until a very late hour of the night, to the great prejudice of good order and military discipline. Finally, we left the Fort, and lay down in our tents to sleep for the little time that remained until our preparations for the march in the morning were to be made.

CHAPTER IV.

Reveille—Packing Up—Breakfast—Appearance of the Camp—Buffalo Bill—Starting Out—Company on the March—On the Plains—Scenery and Characteristics of the Country—Buffalo Grass—Advantages for Stock Farming—Order of March—Going into Camp—Dispositions for the Night—No Hope of Indians—Sheridan's Campaigns—Camp Brown—An Early Start.

AT five in the morning a cavalry bugle sounded the reveille, reminding some, of the old tunes of the war, with its familiar strains, and giving notice to all that the time had come to prepare for moving. As we rose, we discovered that a bed on the ground requires some practice to be perfectly agreeable, and complaints of stiff backs and aching bones were heard; but all were soon too much engaged in preparations for departure to give much attention to personal discomfort. Immediately after reveille the horses were fed, and the soldiers prepared their breakfast. With us, as soon as toilets were completed, packing up began. This done, men of the escort detailed for this duty struck the tents and began to load the wagons, while the members of our party took breakfast in the main tent, which was left standing until the last. This finished, we were ready for the start on the day's march, and this routine was followed during every day of the trip.

As is always the case with any body of troops, be it

CHARLES LIVINGSTONE

large or small, the first day's march is the most difficult to begin, and many delays occurred while those unaccustomed to camp life and marching, were getting prepared for their move. The scene around our camp was striking and interesting. The rising sun threw his first rays upon the hills that on the South and West surrounded the Fort, and gave just light sufficient to discern the activity and movement in our party.

The white tents, some standing, others upon the ground before being packed, the smoke from expiring camp fires, the movement of the wagons preparing to receive their loads, each with its long team of active, sturdy mules, the soldiers in uniform, some mounted and galloping in different directions upon various errands, and others on foot, all busily engaged, and the various groups of horses, all fresh from long rest and good quarters at the Fort, and seemingly as eager to start upon their journey as the keenest sportsman among us, combined to form a picture at once exciting and attractive, and one that will never be forgotten by those who then beheld it.

The most striking feature of the whole was the figure of our friend Buffalo Bill, riding down from the Fort to our camp, mounted upon a snowy white horse. Dressed in a suit of light buckskin, trimmed along the seams with fringes of the same leather, his costume lighted by the crimson shirt worn under his open coat, a broad sombrero on his head, and carrying his rifle lightly in his hand, as his horse came toward us on an easy gallop, he realized to perfection the bold hunter and gallant sportsman of the plains. With all this to interest and amuse, the time passed rapidly until by half-past seven everything had been done, and mounting our horses, we bade good-bye to Camp Rucker and hospitable Fort McPherson, and started on our journey.

As we passed the Fort, General and Mrs. Amory, with several of the officers and ladies of the garrison, rode out, some on horseback and some in carriages, and we found they intended accompanying us for the first few miles of our journey, making a very pleasant addition to our company. Our road for ten miles wound through a wooded ravine called Cotton-wood Canon, which intersected the high ground or divide, as it is called, lying between the North Platte and Republican rivers.

With pleasant society, and in the fresh morning air, the first ten miles of our day's journey were rapidly passed over, until surmounting a sharp and long hill, we emerged from the Canon upon the higher ground, and there halted for lunch, and to say farewell to our kind friends from the Fort, from whom we parted with great regret. Their genial hospitality and kind interest for our comfort had made them seem like old friends, and we all retain warm recollections of the pleasant time we passed at Fort McPherson, and the friends we met at that place.

Our adieus made, we turned our faces southward, and moved on towards the place for our camp that night.

After ascending from the ravine, we found ourselves upon the plains, and the scenery was that which we found on each successive day's journey, and which prevails through the whole of this country. The land is intersected by small streams or rivers running almost invariably east and west, along the banks of which are found bottom lands, varying from a hundred yards to a half a mile in width, with a luxuriant soil, suitable for any agricultural use, and generally thickly wooded, with occasional open intervals of meadow, covered with rank, tall grass. The wood found is principally cotton-wood, with some ash, elm, and hickory. From the banks of these streams the ground rises steeply to the height of forty or fifty feet,

and then spreads out into a vast plain, undulating to some extent, but rising and falling with a difference of elevation hardly perceptible to the eye.

The plains are intersected by the canons which run generally north and south, and which are abrupt, deep fissures, often miles in length, the sides perpendicular, and ranging in depth from ten to seventy feet. These can be crossed by a mounted man only by the paths made by the buffalo, who, in the course of years, have covered the whole country with trails, and along every canon, at intervals, will be found paths descending one bank, and rising on the other, worn by these animals in their journeyings.

The soil of the plains is composed of a hard, dry clay, in the Summer unyielding to the hoof or wheel, and covered with the buffalo grass, the support of the countless animals that are there found. This grass, short, dry, and nearly yellow in color, at first sight would appear to be incapable of sustaining animal life, but it has been found by experience to be the most nutritious of any of the natural grasses, both for wild and domestic animals. The horses of the Indians, which possess wonderful endurance and vigor, have no other food than this while engaged in the hard marches and rapid journeys they are compelled to take, and, as we were informed by our army friends, remain in good condition under very severe work so long as the grass can be found upon the plains. The cavalry horses brought from the East soon learn to feed upon it, and will prefer it to the higher and more luxuriant grasses of the river bottoms. The game we found was in the best possible condition of high feeding, especially the buffalo, which, except in the case of the very old and feeble bulls, were as fat as domestic cattle in the ordinary condition in which they are sent to market.

This is the country which, but a few years since, was

known as the great American Desert, considered uninhabitable, and impossible to be improved, but which is, in reality, highly valuable, and will in time become the most desirable portion of our country for the breeding of sheep and cattle. The river bottoms offer eligible sights for settlements, with sufficiency of wood, water, and arable land, while the plains can provide pasturage the whole year round for any number of animals, which would require no care beyond the labor of herding and the construction of shelters to protect them against the bitter winds that occasionally prevail during the Winter.

The elevation of the country, nearly five thousand feet above the sea level, renders the climate bracing and invigorating, and the total absence of swamps and standing water, and the fact that, at such an elevation, evaporation is so rapid that no dew is perceptible, would secure the settler from the malarial fevers that are so prevalent in new settlements further eastward.

Our friends gone, and the country of our travels reached, we settled down into the regular order of marching, which was, with more or less regularity, kept up throughout our journey. First rode Gen. Sheridan, followed by his guests, and after them the orderlies. Then came our ambulances, one of which contained a lunch to be eaten in the middle of the day, and which were used from time to time by those who wished a change from horseback riding. They also contained the spare guns of the party, and in one was carried five grey hounds, brought for coursing antelope and the large rabbits found upon the plains. With the ambulances marched a pair of Indian ponies belonging to Lieut. Hayes, captured during some Indian fight, and harnessed to a light wagon, which Gen. Sheridan occasionally used. These little horses, but thirteen hands high, showed more vigor and endurance than any other of

the animals we had with us, and during the whole trip were full of life, and as fresh as when starting out. They could climb like cats up and down ravines, with their wagon after them, and few who saw Punch and Judy on the excursion will ever forget these gallant little ponies.

After the ambulances came the main body of our escort, and this again was followed by the supply wagons, all provided with superb mule teams, which had no difficulty in keeping up with the cavalry. Our rate of marching was about five miles an hour, and this always permitted camp to be reached at an early hour, and gave ample time for shooting and hunting after our day's journey was accomplished, in addition to such sport as might be got while on the march.

Our first day's march was not attended with any sport, as no game was to be found near the Fort, and after having made some seventeen miles, we went into camp on the borders of Fox Creek, an affluent of the Republican river.

Our camp was soon pitched on a spot of open ground on the bank of the stream. The horses were picketed with the lariats of their riders, and allowed to graze until evening, when they were brought into the camp, tied up, and fed. The mules unharnessed, were turned loose in a herd, under charge of one of the teamsters, and grazed about the camp until nightfall, when they were also secured. A few sentinels were posted on two or three positions that gave a good view of the surrounding country, and within an hour all our arrangements for passing the night were completed. On the next day we were told we should get into the buffalo country, and the promise of this was sufficient to give to all topics of conversation and interest, and many and various were the questions asked of Buffalo Bill and the others with our party, who were known as adepts in the art of buffalo killing, as to the

manner and method of successfully attacking our wished-for game.

A pleasant dinner closed the day, and in the evening we gathered about a huge camp-fire, which Gen. Sheridan had caused to be built in front of his tent, and, seated in its bright glow, listened to stories of the plains, both of war and of the chase, and were entertained with excellent songs sung by some gifted amateurs who, fortunately, were in our party.

We found that none of our hopes of either seeing or conquering Indians were likely to be gratified. The rigorous peace policy pursued by Gen. Sheridan for the past two years had proved successful in making the savages fully understand that a state of war with the government was to them disastrous, and that he had no belief in the old policy of bribing them with presents to refrain from hostilities. Strictly just, and in time of peace a friend and careful protector of the Indian; he shows no misplaced mercy to him in time of war, and the result of his two winter campaigns has been that now the white man can travel in safety over the plains, where, a year since, no life was safe a mile outside the lines of a fort; and the Indians, well fed and clothed, are living quietly upon their reservations.

This great result has been accomplished by the General's system of fighting hostile Indians during the Winter. In Summer, when the grass is fresh and plenty, the Indians, lightly armed, with no wagon-train, and living entirely on the game they find in their path, mounted on their ponies, can always evade and escape from our troops, and for this reason the campaigns undertaken in the Summer season have always proved fruitless of result. The Indians never fight for glory or for success alone; their battles must be productive of results in plunder or scalps, and

they will never, if it can be avoided, meet in open combat an enemy who may have even the possibility of triumph; and hence, when traveling is possible, they always avoid meeting our troops when in force. In Winter, however, the positions are reversed, and our troops, with the aid of their supply trains, can travel at a time when the animals of the Indians, from lack of forage, are incapable of movement. This idea was adopted by Gen. Sheridan, and two short Winter campaigns, accompanied by very trifling loss of life, have effectually subdued all Indian hostilities in the vast country that is under his command.

Our evening closed with the christening of the camp, which received the title of Camp Brown, from the name of the gallant officer in command of our escort. Having before us a long march for the following day, and an early start being required, we went to rest at a most virtuous hour, and one that few of us had been accustomed to select as the time for repose for many long years. However, in this case, though it but seldom happens in real life, virtue proved its own reward, and all slept well until a bugle, ringing out at three o'clock in the morning of the 24th, satisfactorily explained to unaccustomed minds the meaning of the words "early start" when used in a military sense.

CHAPTER V.

Early Breakfast—Starting on the March—The Buffalo Seen—The First Hunt—Fitzhugh Wins the Cup—Habits of the Old Bulls—Prairie Dogs, Their Habits and Friends—Settlement—Elk Hunting—Shooting Buffalo on the March—Crossing the South Fork of the Medicine—Wilson's Elk Wins the Elk Cup—Camp Jack Hayes.

A BREAKFAST served at half-past four was hardly tempting until the ingenious idea was originated of calling it a late supper, under which name it received full justice. Before six we were in the saddle, all eager to see and shoot the buffaloes, which it was certain we should meet on this day's march. We soon climbed the high ground above the little valley in which we had passed the night, and were again upon the plains and moving rapidly southward, two or three men being sent on in advance, with instructions to report back to the main body the first indications of buffalo that they should observe.

After marching about five miles, we got the welcome news that buffalo were seen by our advanced guard, and, after mounting a slight elevation of the ground, six huge beasts were seen grazing at a distance of about two miles. The wind blowing directly from us towards the game rendered necessary some precaution in approaching them, as, unless collected in large numbers, these animals are very

wary, and if they get notice, by scent or sight, of the approach of a hunter, at once take flight; and, unless the pursuer is well mounted and prepared for a long chase, there is little hope of overtaking them. In spite of his great weight and apparently clumsy form, the buffalo has considerable speed, being able to gallop at a rate of ten or twelve miles an hour for long distances, and they never appear to tire out in a chase. They possess, also, great agility in leaping down and climbing up the steep sides of the canons that cross the plains, and often will go over places where a horse is unable to follow them.

After a consultation with Buffalo Bill it was determined that the best mounted of our party should ride through a convenient canon to a distance that would bring them beyond the buffalo, and then, having the advantage of the wind blowing from the animals, ride down upon them. Accordingly, Fitzhugh, Crosby, Lawrence, Jerome, Livingston, Heckscher and Rogers, with Buffalo Bill as guide, started on the hunt, while the rest of us moved slowly forward, keeping behind the crest of a hill that kept us concealed. After a long detour of nearly five miles, our hunters succeeded in getting within two or three hundred yards of the buffalo before they were perceived, and then charged down upon them. The buffalo, as usual, took one good look at their enemies, and then, wheeling around and stretching their tails straight in the air, set off, full gallop, in Indian file, at a pace that tested the best powers of the horses to surpass. Just as they started, our main body emerged from its concealment, and had a full view of the whole hunt, a most exciting and interesting sight to those new to the plains. On came the six huge buffalo, one behind the other, all running together as regularly as if kept in their places by some rule of drill, and close behind them the hunters, each horse doing his best, and now one

leading and then another, as though in a hotly contested race. Another moment and a canon is reached, down the steep sides of which the buffalo plunge without relaxing speed, and in an instant are seen climbing the opposite bank. Fitzhugh finds the best place to cross the obstacle, and is seen the first to overcome it, and rapidly catching up with the game, he is alongside the last of the buffalo; in another moment one shot is fired, and the huge brute falters in his step; another, and down he pitches upon his head, nearly turning over and over as he falls. As Fitzhugh pulls up beside his victim, Crosby, on his black pony, shoots by him, and his rifle levels another of the herd; and Livingston, closing up rapidly from the rear, dispatches a third. Those of us not directly engaged in the hunt, pushed up to the scene of action as rapidly as possible, and arrived in time to assist the successful sportsmen in taking the trophies of their hunt. The buffalo hunter always secures the tail of the buffalo he has killed, as the Indian does the scalp of the enemy he has overcome, to prove to the world the fact of his success. The lucky men were heartily congratulated upon their success, and Fitzhugh hailed at once, as the winner of the buffalo cup; while all sympathized with Heckscher, whose chance of killing, at the outset of the chase, was the best of all, but lost, from his horse falling and rolling over him, while descending the bank of the canon. His injuries, fortunately, were very slight, and did not prevent him from keeping the saddle; and he and the other unlucky ones, before the day was done, had opportunity sufficient to make up for any want of success at the outset. The hunt over, we left some men to take out the tongues and best parts of the meat of the buffaloes, and rode on with the column.

We were told, and as the event proved, we should

find buffalo in plenty within the day's march; the finding of a small party of old bulls, such as those we hunted, being always a sign of the vicinity of a herd.

It appears that as the male buffaloes become advanced in life, the younger bulls, as soon as they have age and strength for the combat, combine to drive them from the herd; and these venerable patriarchs, thus excluded from general society, form small clubs among themselves, much as is the custom in civilized life among elderly gentlemen devoted to a life of single blessedness; and, while not daring to mingle with the herds, they keep about the outskirts of the society they once adorned, very much respected, but considered too old fashioned, and too much behind the age to receive attention or consideration. Finding one of these bands of bulls, as they are properly termed, always gives warning that a large herd is near.

The hunt done, and the party collected, we rode forward on our march, our path, for several miles, passing through a prairie dog town, where the ground in every direction was filled with the burrows of these curious little animals. These creatures are found throughout the plains, living together in a sort of society, as thousands of their burrows are found in their so-called towns, adjoining each other, and great care is necessary in riding through these places, the ground being so undermined as often to fall in under the weight of a horse. The prairie dog is a quaint and cunning little creature, somewhat resembling a woodchuck in miniature, and still more like the European marmot. He is from twelve to thirteen inches in length, with a short tail; of a reddish brown color, that at a distance, renders it difficult to distinguish him on the bare earth that always surrounds their burrows. Around the entrance to their holes, the ground is piled up almost a foot high; and on these little elevations, the animals sit upon their hind legs,

and chatter to each other, and observe whatever passes on the plains. They are very curious, and will watch a passer-by attentively, and permit him to approach quite near; but when they have looked sufficiently, they dive into their holes with wonderful quickness, and with a peculiar toss of their hind quarters in the air, that defies description. For this reason, they are difficult to kill, for if hit however badly, when near their holes, they always succeed in disappearing, and the burrows are so deep and extensive, that it is the work of hours, to reach the bottom of them by digging. The only chance of getting them is to hide near a town, and when the inhabitants are engaged in visiting from one burrow to another, as they constantly do, when not alarmed by the sight of a man, an opportunity of knocking them over may be had. In these dog towns are always found numbers of rattle-snakes, and of small owls, which live in the same holes as the prairie dogs, apparently on very good terms, and in a condition of perfect equality. A few of the prairie dogs were killed from time to time, on our journey, and found very palatable eating, the meat being much like that of the squirrel. A short distance beyond the dog town, we met with a settlement situated on a small creek running into the Medicine river. Here we found five uncivilized white men, each with a squaw, as a partner of his existence, and each couple blessed with a numerous family of half-breed children. These people had settled about six months before on the spot where we found them. Each family lived in an Indian tent, made of dried buffalo skins, supported on poles, in shape and size resembling the Sibley tents used in our army. They owned a herd of horses and mules, and a few cattle, and had cultivated some portion of the bottom land along the creek, on which they raised corn and pumpkins, drying the latter for their winter supply of veget-

ables. Their principal occupation was hunting; and around the settlement were large numbers of buffalo hides, being tanned in the Indian manner—removing the hair by soaking in water, and then dressing the skin by rubbing with the brains and fat of the animal, a process that renders it exceedingly soft and pliable, and cures it perfectly. We spent some time in interviewing these oldest inhabitants, and found that they considered themselves most comfortably and pleasantly situated, and disposed to commiserate all people so unfortunate as not to be able to live on the plains, and share the pleasures and delights of the life they enjoyed. We left these fortunate individuals happy in their existence, not much superior in comfort or in refinement to their next-door neighbors, the prairie dogs, and soon after reaching the Medicine River, we halted for lunch. After lunch our party broke into two detachments, one hunting along the bank of the Medicine River, in the hope of finding elk or deer, which always frequent the woods along the streams, and the other remaining with the main body of the escort. The elk hunters had no success beyond seeing, and firing a shot in vain after a fine elk that got away; while the others met buffalo in plenty, and nearly every one, before the day was over, had killed his first buffalo.

The most remarkable shot of the day was made by Mr. Lawrence Jerome, who, while riding in an ambulance, in the midst of the column, killed a fine bull that attempted to cross the line of march.

About 4 P. M. we reached the spot for our camp, on the Mitchell's Fort of the Medicine River, after a long day's ride, the distance traveled being thirty-five miles in a direct line, and nearly all of us having ridden at least fifty in the different excursions that had been made from the route we followed.

A good deal of time and some trouble were required to pass our teams over to the south bank of the stream, on which our camp for the night was to be established, as a bridge had to be built for the wagons to cross on, and it was necessary to double all the teams to pull up the steep hill that formed the northern bank. At this work, our friend, Buffalo Bill, proved himself as skillful as he was in killing buffalo, and by his science in bridge building, and success as a teamster, acquired new titles to our confidence and respect. At last the day's work was over, and our tents pitched, and all were glad to enjoy the rest that our hard day's ride made so acceptable. On counting our own party at dinner, we found that General Rucker and Mr. Wilson were absent, and on inquiry, learned that they, feeling the day had not afforded them quite enough of excitement, had gone out from camp quietly to enjoy a little hunting by themselves.

Their enterprise and perseverance met its reward; for in an hour, they returned with the news that Mr. Wilson had killed an elk, and soon after, a wagon being sent for it, the animal was brought into camp, and proved to be a magnificent beast, with splendid antlers. Thus Mr. Wilson became the winner of the elk cup, and many were the congratulations that he and Fitzhugh received as being the winners of the two trophies of success in the hunt. By consent of all, the name of Camp Jack Hayes was given to our camp, in honor of Lieutenant Hayes, Fifth Cavalry, who acted as the quartermaster of our expedition, and to whom we all felt indebted, as well for the care and forethought with which our many wants had been provided for, as for his kind assistance and advice in pursuing our sport, and the generosity he displayed in giving every opportunity for success to those not so skilled or experienced as himself. We dined sumptuously this day, having as our

piece de resistance roast buffalo, and nothing better can be said of it than that it is fully equal to beef, and, indeed, hardly to be distinguished from it.

We sat long this evening around a blazing camp fire, under a cloudless sky, for each one had some story of his own adventures during the day to relate, and slept at last as only men can sleep who have won repose by a day of the hardest work.

CHAPTER VI.

In the Buffalo Country—Shooting Buffalo—Coursing Antelope—How they are Shot—Camp on the Republican—Wild Turkeys—Elk—Deer—Camp Asch—Fording the Republican—Large Herd of Buffalo—Loss of Buckskin Joe—Camp on the Beaver—Abundance of Game—Camp Cody.

GENERAL SHERIDAN had some compassion on our tired condition, and on the morning of the 25th, reveille sounded at the very reasonable hour of six, and we broke camp and moved off at eight.

We had reached the country where buffalo were to be found in abundance, and hence we had no further reason for haste in traveling, it being our intention to make short marches while in the country where game was plenty, and have opportunity for hunting away from the line of march.

This morning our party broke into three detachments—one in charge of Lieutenant Hayes, going to the right, another, with Buffalo Bill as guide, bore off to the left, while a few, remaining with the wagons and troops, proceeded on the direct line to our next camping ground.

Those who were with the wagons had a good day's sport, buffalo being plenty, and many running across the trail we were traveling One party of eight crossed our path about two hundred yards in advance of us, and gave General Sheridan an opportunity of testing the value of a new

gun he had with him of the Ward Burton pattern. With two shots he knocked over the two leading animals of the herd, killing each dead with a single shot. Three others in the party each killed his buffalo out of this band. Soon after an antelope was seen, and we attempted to catch it with some of the dogs we carried in the ambulance. A fine English grayhound bitch, imported by General Sheridan, and a hound belonging to Major Brown, were started, and we had the view of a very exciting chase, as the antelope ran in a circle for a long time within our sight. It tired out the dogs at last, and got off clear.

This was an invariable experience in coursing the antelope with dogs. We had several grayhounds as good as could be procured in this country, and the bitch, owned by Gen. Sheridan, was of the best English thoroughbred stock, yet, in no instance, did they succeed in taking an antelope: these little animals, possessing immense speed and endurance, far exceeding that of the hounds. Quite a number were shot during the trip, by stalking them on foot, and, with a little patience on the hunter's part, they are easily killed.

It is a remarkably inquisitive creature, and if not at first alarmed, will gradually approach any object to which it is unaccustomed. When an antelope is seen, if the hunter will remain perfectly quiet and motionless, and is to windward of his game, the antelope will move from side to side watching him, and by degrees coming nearer and nearer, until an excellent opportunity for a shot is had.

We reached the junction of the Republican and Medicine Rivers soon after our antelope hunt, and completed there an easy day's march of but thirteen miles, getting into Camp about one P. M.

The party with Lieutenant Hayes had excellent sport. They met a flock of wild turkey about three miles from our

late camp, of which Mr. Heckshcher killed the first. Mr. Livingston was so fortunate as to bring down two with one bullet, and General Fitzhugh killed two. They killed several buffalo, among them a magnificent bull, the credit for which was divided between Livingston and Heckscher; four prairie dogs and two antelopes—one of the latter shot by Lieutenant Hayes and the other by Heckscher. The third detachment of sportsmen had equal good fortune. Mr. Johnston killed a black-tailed deer. General Stager stalked and killed an elk, and an orderly with the party killed a second. Mr. Lawrence Jerome in the morning, by the exercise of his unrivalled powers of persuasion, succeeded in obtaining from Buffalo Bill the best hunting horse in the whole party—a dismal looking, dun-colored brute, rejoicing in the name of Buckskin Joe; but, like a singed cat, much better than he looked. He was a wonderful beast for hunting, as his subsequent conduct proved, and on his back Jerome did wonders for one brief day among the buffalo. Leonard Jerome, Bennett, and Rogers were all successful in hunting buffalo, and evening found us collected in camp around our dinner table, all contented with the fortune the day had brought. General Sheridan had tried his luck at fishing during the afternoon, and succeeded in catching fourteen fish, of a kind unknown at the East, called cisco—something like perch, which we found were excellent for the table.

Our camp of this night was named Camp Asch, to commemorate our surgeon, Dr. Asch, of whose professional skill nothing can speak more highly than the fact that not one of us had any ailment whatever while under his care, assisted as he was by Mr. Heckscher, who, on several occasions, displayed eminent ability as an amateur doctor.

Before reveille on the morning of the 26th, we were awakened by two shots, which proved to be from Mr. Wil-

son, who had killed two fine mallard duck that were flying over the camp.

We left camp about 8 A. M., and forded the Republican River at the beginning of our march. This stream is quite wide, but very shallow during the Summer; the banks, however, showed that it was subject to heavy freshets in the Spring, when it must obtain considerable size. About two miles south of the river we came upon an immense number of buffalo scattered over the country in every direction, as far as the eye could reach, and all had an opportunity for as much buffalo hunting as they wished. The wagons and troops marched slowly along in the direction of our next camp, while the hunters went off separately or by twos and threes in different directions, and all were successful. Lawrence Jerome, mounted on his charger, Buckskin Joe, and envied by all for having so good a mount, was doing his utmost when his career was brought to an untimely end. He had dismounted to take a particularly careful shot at a buffalo he wished to secure, and incautiously let go of his horse's bridle. The buffalo, contrary to rule, running off at the shot, instead of dropping as he was bound to do, was followed by Buckskin Joe, determined to do a little hunting on his own account, and perhaps wishing to show Mr. Jerome how the thing should be properly done. His master watched the chase with great interest, and the last seen of Buckskin Joe, he was a little ahead of the buffalo, and gaining slightly, leaving his rider to his own reflections and a tramp of some distance, until his desolate condition was discerned, and another horse sent him, warranted not to run under any provocation.

It may be added here, that three days after his desertion of our party, as we subsequently learned, Buckskin Joe, all saddled and bridled, turned up a Fort McPherson,

where he still remains in the service of his country. After a pleasant march of fifteen miles, we reached camp on the bank of the Beaver River, in a charming spot, and were soon most comfortably established. The region about the Beaver River was in former times the choicest of the Indian hunting grounds, abounding, as it does, in game of all kinds, and being well watered and provided with timber. Along the banks of the stream for many miles were found the remains of what had once been Indian Camps, in the days when the Indians were the undisputed masters of this country. Nothing could be more attractive to the hunter than this ground. The plains were covered with buffalo; in the low grounds, about the banks of the river elk and deer were plenty, antelopes and rabbits were found in all directions, and turkeys and wild ducks were abundant.

It was determined to remain over a day in this camp, as this was the best hunting ground we could find on our trip. In the afternoon, some hunted for turkeys and ducks, which were got in numbers, and the evening found us as usual. The camp was named Camp Cody, after our guide, philosopher and friend, Buffalo Bill.

CHAPTER VIII.

Day at Camp Cody—Porcupine—Hunting Jack Rabbits—Coyotes—Elk, Antelope, Wild Turkeys—Dinner—Court-Martial.

ON the morning of the 27th we enjoyed the comfort of a late breakfast, and having no march to make, could take as much time for the meal as the most luxurious among us thought desirable. While at breakfast an addition was made to our party by the arrival in camp of a porcupine, which some of the men had caught at a little distance from camp, and brought in by the aid of several halter straps fastened about him. It was a very large and fine animal of the kind, and a box being made for him, was accepted at once as a companion of our journey, with the intention of bringing him to New York upon our return. Our hospitality and attention were, however, thrown away upon the creature, for two nights afterward he contrived to gnaw away some of the bars of his cage, and, turning his back upon the blessings of civilization and improvement so liberally offered, he escaped to his native plains to pursue his former inglorious and barbarous existence.

After breakfast our party, in small detachments, went in different directions to seek such fortune as chance might throw in our paths.

Gen. Sheridan took with him the grayhounds, and, with his companions, had some excellent sport in coursing the jack rabbits that were found in numbers about our camp.

These animals are called the jack or jackass rabbits, from the size of the ears, which are nearly six inches in length; but they are properly a species of hare. Their habits are those of the latter animal, and except in color and the excessive length of ear, they much resemble the English hare. When alarmed, they at first sit up on their hind legs until they can get a view of the enemy, and then make off at great speed, frequently turning and doubling as they run; and their speed is so great that it required the best efforts of our choicest dogs to overtake them. They have a singular habit while running of occasionally rising on their hindlegs and making a dozen leaps after the manner of a kangaroo, and then resuming their usual method of going.

After getting several rabbits, two coyotes, or prairie wolves, were seen, and the dogs started in pursuit of them. They ran well, but were no match for the dogs, who soon overtook and attacked the slower of the two, upon which the other turned and came back to aid his comrade; and they fought most savagely until a pistol shot from one of the orderlies gave each his quietus.

These prairie wolves were our constant attendants on the whole march, following us at a distance sufficient to preserve them from any chance of a shot, and feeding upon the remains of any game that might be left behind. At night they always gathered about our camp, and kept up, as long as the darkness lasted, a chorus of the most fearful and mournful howls. Utterly worthless for any other purpose, they are of some service as scavengers of the country, and a buffalo killed over night, and left on the

plains, will be found on the following morning to be entirely devoured, and the bones as cleanly picked as if prepared for a specimen.

General Fitzhugh, on the banks of the stream next south of the Beaver, killed an elk whose head and antlers, the finest we had obtained, he carried home as a trophy.

Crosby killed an antelope during the day, and Dr. Asch and General Stager were very successful in shooting wild turkeys.

Our attendants having the day before them undisturbed, had made great efforts with the dinner; and with the appetites of hunters, we did credit to their exertions. Traveling as we were, we were obliged to depend for support upon our skill as marksmen, and the dinner of the day is given here to show the privations that all who determine to dare the perils of a trip on the plains must put up with:

SOUP.

Buffalo Tail.

FISH.

Cisco broiled, fried Dace.

ENTREES.

Salmi of Prairie Dog, Stewed Rabbit, Filet of Buffalo, aux Champignons.

ROAST.

Elk, Antelope, Black-tailed Deer, Wild Turkey.

BROILED.

Teal, Mallard, Antelope Chops, Buffalo-Calf Steaks, Young Wild Turkey.

VEGETABLES.

Sweet Potatoes, Mashed Potatoes, Green Peas.

DESSERT.

Tapioca Pudding.

VINS.

Champagne Frappe, Champagne au Naturel, Claret, Whiskey, Brandy, and Bass' Ale.

COFFEE.

On such simple, hardy food as this we were compelled to live, and yet all had appetite and thoroughly relished their hunter's fare.

This evening was made memorable by a painful duty that had for some time past been pressing itself upon our attention.

One unfortunate member of our party had committed many offences that had passed for awhile unpunished, all hoping that good associations around him, and the many excellent examples constantly before his eyes, would check him in his fatal course, and that an awakened conscience would alone suffice to bring him back to the paths of virtue and rectitude. But these had no effect, and in the interests of discipline and good order, it was, to the great regret of all, found needful that more serious measures must be taken.

A court-martial was therefore organized, and before the august tribunal the unhappy man was brought and held to answer.

The prosecuting officer, obliged by stern duty to pursue his task, detailed before the judges the hideous story of the wretched criminal's offences, and supported his case with the most positive and direct testimony that remained unshaken after a severe cross-examination.

It was clearly proved that the criminal had aided and abetted in the loss of a Government horse ; that there was

strong reason to believe he had something to do with the mysterious disappearance of a Colt's pistol, which he had borrowed from its owner, and which had never since been seen; that there was no doubt of the fact that he had feloniously disposed of several pocket-pistols, the property of others; that at night he snored in a manner that was fiendish, and, in addition to all this, he had been guilty of a variety of other less offences too numerous to mention.

The unfortunate prisoner, after a feeble attempt to evade the charge in reference to the Colt pistol, by stating that he had returned a horse-pistol to the party owning the weapon, and claiming that instead of losing a Government horse, the fact was that the horse had lost him; in both of which defences, it is needless to say, he failed entirely, made a futile effort to prove good character, and finally, confessing all, threw himself upon the mercy of the Court.

Chief Justice Cody delivered the opinion of the Court in a manner at once dignified and able, and as an act of clemency, suspended judgment for the time being, remarking, that while the camp fire held out to burn the vilest sinner might return, and in hope of amendment, he would defer sentence.

This impressive exhibition of justice concluded, all returned to rest, sadder and wiser men.

CHAPTER VIII.

Early Start—Crossing the South Beaver—Camp on Short-Nose Creek—Buffalo, Turkeys—Party Lost—Camp Stager—March to the North Solomon—Beaver Dam—Camp Jerome—Helping the Mules—Interesting Relics.

A PORTION of the command made a very early start on the morning of the 28th, thirty men, under Lieutenant Hayes, being sent forward nine miles to the South Beaver River, to prepare a crossing place for the main body, which was to leave camp at the usual time.

Two very enthusiastic hunters rose at three o'clock to accompany this party, but gained nothing but one antelope by their diligence.

The crossing of this stream, even after our preparations, was found a difficult undertaking, and nearly two hours were occupied in getting over. After crossing, we found a very fair road, and marching rapidly forward we reached camp on the Short-Nose Creek about 2 P. M., after a march of twenty-four miles.

After making camp, some buffalo were seen about a mile away; and the afternoon was spent in hunting them, and shooting turkeys. Of the latter General Sheridan got five, a very good bag of this game for one afternoon. Colonel Crosby, with Livingston and Heckscher, had parted with

us at the crossing of the South Beaver, intending to keep to our right on the march, and as they did not come in for a long time after we were in camp, some fear was felt lest they might have lost their direction, but, about six in the evening, they turned up all right, with a number of turkeys and ducks, after a very long ride, and after feeling some apprehension that they had mistaken their way, and might have to camp out on the plains all night. Nothing is easier than for a traveler, not accustomed to the plains, to lose the direction of his journey, and, once bewildered, it is scarcely possible to again get on the right track unassisted. Some of the men with us had had the experience of being lost, and say that a man once turned wrong will generally travel in a circle of greater or less dimensions, and there is very little hope of his ever finding his way, unless he, fortunately, should strike a trail or get within sight of some landmark that can indicate his route. Of these aids to travel there are, of course, but very few to be found on the plains. The different streams resemble each other so closely that they cannot be distinguished by an inexperienced eye, and there are few hills or prominent elevations that present individuality sufficient to attract observation, or remain fixed in the memory.

It is never safe, while on the plains, to stray far from the party with which one travels, and though at present there is not much to apprehend, when lost, beyond discomfort and privation, it is not at all desirable to run the risk of those inconveniences.

As the sun went down the weather became very cold, but a good dinner and a bright camp fire made us indifferent to this, and the evening passed jovially in our camp, to which the name of Camp Stager was given, with the full consent of all.

On the morning of the 29th we got off at seven A. M.,

and traveled rapidly for twenty-four miles until we reached our halting place, on the North Solomon River, about one P. M.

We found the freshest and clearest water that we had seen during our march in this river, which flows over a clear sandy bed, and gave opportunity for a refreshing and welcome bath.

Our account of game for this day was not large, compristng only three buffaloes, two antelopes, two raccoons, and three teal; and we found that, as we went southward, we were leaving the best hunting grounds.

Near our camp was a large beaver dam, which was well worth seeing, it being the largest structure of the kind we had met in our journey. The beaver had selected for the place of their work a spot a little distance below the junction of two streams, where they secured an abundant supply of water, and having built a dam some six feet high and twenty yards wide, they had made a pond covering more than four acres. The ground all around was covered with the evidences of their labor, shown in the stumps of the trees and filled with the chips they had bitten out in gnawing down the trees, and the small limbs and brushwood they had lopped from the timber used. Many cotton-wood trees, eighteen inches in diameter, had been cut down and used in the construction of the dam, and we found several upon which they had been working when disturbed by our approach. We looked long and anxiously to get some view of the animals themselves, but without success; and were told by the old hunters in our party that the beaver is so cautious and wary that it is scarcely ever possible to get sight of them. They can only be taken in traps, and then the greatest care is required to obtain them.

Our camp of this evening was distinguished by the name of Camp Leonard Jerome, and its godfather ex-

tended the hospitalities of his new possession in a most satisfactory manner, and won the highest praises of his guests at an impromptu entertainment he gave.

Our teams had begun in some degree to feel the toil of their march, and we saw that it was the part of true humanity to relieve them as much as possible, and, therefore, every one felt it his duty on this, and on the few remaining evenings of our trip, to lessen the burdens of these unhappy animals by a generous and rapid consumption of our stores.

With this worthy object in view, all applied themselves to the good work with a zeal that would have won the applause of Mr. Bergh could he but have witnessed it, and that no doubt, would entitle some to the medals bestowed by the amiable society over which he presides, if their unselfish labors had been presented to it in a proper light.

However, the want of appreciation did not relax our exertions, and the mules and ourselves, if no others, were much benefitted by the work of the evening, and, doubtless, the antiquary of some thousands of years hence, if he should explore the site of Camp Jerome, will find convincing proof that the primitive man, whose traces he will be searching for, used black vases, with long and narrow necks, marked Mumm and Roederer, the uses and purposes of which will afford a fertile field for the speculations of the savans of that day.

CHAPTER IX.

Little Game—Camp on the South Solomon River—Accident to Hound—Bill's Ride to Fort Hayes—Camp Sam Johnson's March to the Salina—Buffalo Hunt—Arrival of the Mail—Camp Davies—Disturbances in Camp.

THE morning of the 30th was clear and bright, and at our usual hour we started for the day's march. A very heavy wind prevailed all day, blowing with a force that is experienced only at sea, or on the vast, unbroken plains of the West. We found no game except a few buffalo during the day until our march had been completed, when a good flock of turkeys was started in the woods on the banks of South Fork of the Solomon River, where we halted, after having made twenty-five miles. Nine of the turkeys were shot, which, with two rabbits and three or four buffalo, were all the game obtained that day.

In the evening an accident happened to Gen. Sheridan's grayhound, which, while coursing a rabbit, ran against and almost impaled herself upon a sharp, projecting limb of a tree that had been cut down, running the wood more than three inches inches into her chest. The valuable service of our medical staff were at once called into requisition, and the piece of wood being extracted, the poor dog was

carefully tended, and, as we afterwards learned, in a month recovered entirely from the wound.

We were now but forty-five miles from Fort Hayes, the point at which we expected to strike the Kansas Pacific Railway, and when our journey on the plains would end; our friends in Chicago had promised to forward all letters for our party to that point, and Buffalo Bill on this evening volunteered to ride into Fort Hayes, and meet us on the next day, bringing with him all the letters that might be at the post.

Taking the best horse that was with the command, he started on a dark night, expecting, as he said, to reach Fort Hayes in about four hours from the time he left us.

Our camping ground will hereafter rejoice in the name of Camp Sam Johnson, a name bestowed for the reason that "he was a jolly good fellow," which was forcibly and at great length insisted upon during the evening by the musical members of our party, in the intervals of our efforts to reduce the excessive amount of stores still found in the wagons.

The next morning, that of October 1st, found us early on our way, and with little to commemorate, we traveled thirty miles until the Salina River was reached, where we made our last camp on the plains. Just as we reached the river some buffalo and antelope were seen, and several of the former killed. While hunting these, Fitzhugh had a narrow escape of being unhorsed: a buffalo cow, that he had wounded, making a desperate charge at him, and just grazing his horse's flank with her horn. In this place let it be said, for the information of all future novel writers who undertake to depict stirring scenes upon the plains, that it is from cows and not from bulls that any danger to the hunter is to be expected. The cow is much more active, spirited, and malicious than the bull, and will make

a much harder fight than the latter, who permits himself to be killed with great equanimity, and little, if any, remonstrance.

As we were engaged in this, as it proved our last hunt, we were agreeably surprised to see Buffalo Bill in the middle of the herd, engaged in killing a young buffalo, which he soon accomplished, and then joined us, bringing with him a large mail that he had found at Fort Hayes, which afforded to us all welcome reading matter upon our arrival at camp. We passed a quiet afternoon, and in the evening gathered around our camp fire for the last time. The duty of naming the camp, which was called Camp Davies, having been duly performed, the different members of our party joined in an effort to make that night the pleasantest of all we had spent together, and as it was agreed upon all sides with great success. We had eloquent speeches, melodious songs, and interesting anecdotes, accompanied with a potent incitement to jollity in an immense reservoir of champagne punch, most excellently made, and until a late hour the coyotes, and any other neighbors we might have had, were listening in suspense to these unaccustomed sounds that awakened the echoes along the banks of the Salina. Even after all had retired, the adventures of the night were not over; in one tent a lively rattlesnake prevented for some time the slumbers of its occupants, while another tent, in consequence of insecure fastenings, or some cause unascertained, fell gently to the ground, deserting its inmates, whom it should have protected, but who, in guileless innocence and peace, slept sweetly through the night, all undisturbed.

A story was told the next day, that, while our camp was buried in repose that night, a small party of Indians roamed among the sleepers, and the appearance of an undersized and ill-favored little squaw, dressed in a com-

plete suit of red flannel, who accompanied the chief in command of the party, was minutely described by those who pretended to have observed these unexpected and unwelcome visitors. The story, though told so circumstantially by those who claimed to have seen what they related, was not believed, and it was generally supposed to have resulted from the stimulating effects of punch acting upon minds morbidly excited by some terrific stories of Indians, and their ways and manners, that Buffalo Bill had narrated during the evening.

CHAPTER X.

Arrival at Fort Hayes—Camp Heckscher—Start for the East—Chicago Again—Presentation to Lawrence Jerome—Break up of the Party.

ON the morning of the 2d we marched to Fort Hayes, distant but fifteen miles, seeing no game upon the way. On reaching the post, which is near the railroad, we pitched our tents once more, expecting to remain in camp another night, while waiting for a car that had been telegraphed for to receive our party, but soon learned that it had been already sent forward in anticipation of our arrival, and that we could start for the East at three o'clock by attaching our car to a train that would pass at that hour. We had received here, through the kindness of General Stager, telegraphic dispatches of all that was going on in the world at large, and the alarming news we had of a panic in the financial world made some of our capitalists extremely anxious to return home. This, however, was fortunately proved by later dispatches to be a mistake, and the minds of such as had any money to lose were agreeably relieved. We also learned here, for the first time, of the changes that had so suddenly occurred in the City Government of New York, and this making perceptible

the great need that existed in that unfortunate city, at such a crisis, for the presence of its purest and best citizens was a strong motive to induce our speedy return.

It was, therefore, unanimously voted to take the train that afternoon, and after exchanging our hunting equipment for the clothes of civilized life, and duly christening Camp Heckscher, the last of our homes under canvas, we proceeded to the depot to embark for home.

Here we parted with Major Brown and Lieutenant Hayes, who were to return in a few days to Fort McPherson with the wagons and troops, regretting much to lose them from our party, and recognizing most sincerely the obligations we were under to these officers for their pleasant society and their kind and successful efforts for our comfort and enjoyment on the trip. Here, also, we all shook hands and exchanged a hearty good-bye with Buffalo Bill, to whose skill as a hunter, and experience as a guide, we were so much indebted.

We found a comfortable and pleasant car reserved for our use, and in a few moments we were speeding Eastward, with nothing left us of our life of the past ten days but pleasant memories and the trophies of success that we had secured.

Our journey back to Chicago was pleasant, but uneventful, and we reached that city after an easy and comfortable journey on the morning of the fourth of October.

After the performance of the duties of the toilet, required upon returning to domestic life from so long a sojourn in the wilderness, including the sacrifice of several very promising beards, we all met around a well-spread breakfast-table, at the Sherman House, in company with several of our friends residing in Chicago, and passed the morning pleasantly in recalling the incidents of the trip

and in relating the various fortunes that attended the different members of our party.

A very interesting circumstance of this entertainment was the presentation by the guests of a testimonial to Mr Lawrence Jerome, in recognition of his powers as a hunter, and of the high esteem in which he was held by all.

This consisted of a magnificent cane, made of a growth peculiar to the plains, handsomely mounted and adorned with an appropriate inscription. It was accepted by its recipient with great emotion, and in eloquent and fitting words, he told us of his grateful appreciation of the gift so unexpectedly conferred, and of the tender regard with which he would always cherish the present, and remember those by whom it had been bestowed.

Our party was again that evening brought together at an elegant dinner given by General Stager at the Chicago Club, and which was most highly and deservedly enjoyed, and with this last feast the history of our party on the plains comes to an end.

The next day saw most of us on their way to their respective homes, and almost upon our arrival we all were shocked to learn of the great calamity that so shortly after our departure overwhelmed the hospitable and pleasant city in which we had passed such joyous days, and of the misfortunes that had overtaken the kind friends we left there but a few hours before in the enjoyment of all that can make life happy. Fortunately for them, the same spirit and enterprise, that had so rapidly and marvelously built up the city of their homes, still survive ; and we hear with pleasure that a new Chicago is rising upon the ruins of the old that bids fair to surpass the city of which we retain such pleasant memories.

The writer here has reached the end of a narrative that, at the request of his companions of the hunt, he un-

dertook. This duty was assumed with some reluctance, by one who has never before ventured to trust to the criticism of the world any efforts of his pen, and this would not have been undertaken but for the fact that it is intended for circulation only among those whose interest in the scenes described, and in the story told, will prevent them from looking upon it with the uninterested and impartial eye of the ordinary reader of such a narrative.

Comrades of the hunt and of the bivouac, it is hoped, will look upon this only as an attempt well meant, however it may have been accomplished, by one of their number to tell simply and truthfully the incidents and events of a journey that was delightful while it continued, and will ever be grateful in memory. In writing it out there has been much that was gratifying, for as every scene and every event of those pleasant days have been set down, they almost seemed in reality to return again ; and if any reader shall derive from these pages the same enjoyment that has accompanied their preparation, the writer's aim will have been more than accomplished, and his labor will have received the highest reward he could have asked.

While the end is reached, it is yet difficult to pen the final word, and to know that written, our hunt, and all belonging to it, is at an end. No party of the kind could have been more pleasant, more harmonious, or more happy. It is hard to feel that such associations and such enjoyments are of necessity but short in duration and infrequent in occurrence, and still harder to think, that in all human probability, the band of friends, who so long rode, hunted and feasted together on the wide Western plains will never again be united as they then were. With the kindest wishes to all, and with pleasantest memories of the past, the story of the hunt is concluded.

THE END.